

Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1-32 are currently pending and unamended.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original): A method for obtaining a postage stamp by a user system, comprising a processor, a memory, and a printer, from a website server over a communications network, said method comprising:

requesting said stamp from said website server;

receiving an markup language message comprising encoded binary data representing a machine-readable portion of an indicium associated with said stamp, said indicium comprising a digital signature; and

using said print program, printing said machine-readable portion on a pre-processed label by said printer.

2. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein said print program is downloaded from said website server and stored in said memory.

3. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein said markup language includes a Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML).

4. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein said markup language includes a Hypertext Markup Language (HTML).

5. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein said markup language includes an eXtensible Markup Language (XML).

6. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein in said print program includes an ActiveX control.

7. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein in said print program includes a dynamic link library(dll) file.

8. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein in said print program does not require a license from the United States Postal Service to execute.

9. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein in said print program does not require a separate account from the United States Postal Service to execute.

10. (Original): A method for obtaining a postage stamp by a user system, comprising a processor, a memory, and a printer, from a website server over a communications network, said method comprising:

storing a print program downloaded from said website server in said memory;

requesting said stamp from said website server;

receiving an XML message comprising encoded binary data representing a machine-readable portion of an indicium associated with said stamp, said indicium comprising a digital signature; and

using said print program, printing said machine-readable portion on a pre-processed label by said printer.

11. (Original): The method of claim 10 wherein said markup language includes a Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML).

12. (Original): The method of claim 10 wherein said requesting includes an XML data structure.

13. (Original): The method of claim 12 wherein said XML data structure includes a serial number that identifies said pre-processed label.

14. (Original): The method of claim 10 wherein said print program includes an ActiveX control.

15. (Original): The method of claim 10 wherein said print program is downloaded only once.

16. (Original): The method of claim 10 wherein said print program is downloaded each time a user logs into said website server.

17. (Original): The method of claim 10 wherein said encoded binary data is base 64.

18. (Original): The method of claim 10 wherein said pre-processed label has at least one of the following security features: bar-coding, micro-printing, watermarking, fluorescent strips, serrated edges, taggants, label sheet serial number, or individual label serial number.

19. (Original): The method of claim 10 wherein said XML message further comprises a meter number, a rate class, and an amount of postage.

20. (Original): The method of claim 10 further comprising:
using said print program, printing a logo on said pre-processed label by said printer; and

using said print program, printing microprint line on said pre-processed label by said printer.

21. (Original): The method of claim 10 further comprising:
using said print program, printing said meter number on said pre-processed label by said printer;

using said print program, printing said rate class on said pre-processed label by said printer; and

using said print program, printing said amount of postage on said pre-processed label by said printer.

22. (Original): A computer program product stored in a computer readable medium for obtaining a postage stamp by a user system, comprising a processor, a memory, and a printer, from a website server over a communications network, said computer program product comprising:

code for requesting said stamp from said website server;

code for receiving an XML message, said XML message comprising encoded binary data representing a machine-readable portion of an indicium associated with said stamp, said indicium comprising a digital signature; and

code for printing said machine-readable portion on a pre-processed label by said printer.

23. (Original): The computer program product of claim 22 wherein said code for requesting comprises an XML data structure.

24. (Original): The computer program product of claim 22 wherein said XML message further comprises a postal rate class.

25. (Original): A system for obtaining a postage stamp from a central server via a communication network, comprising:

a memory;

a processor coupled to said memory for sending a user request for said postage stamp in a markup language format to said central server;

a software module stored in said memory for extracting an indicium from a markup language message received in response to said user request, said indicium including a digital signature;

a printer for printing said indicium on a pre-processed label.

26. (Original): The system of claim 25 wherein markup language is XML.

27. (Original): The system of claim 25 wherein markup language is SGML.

28. (Original): The system of claim 25 wherein markup language is HTML
29. (Original): The system of claim 25 wherein said software module includes an ActiveX control.
30. (Original): The system of claim 25 wherein said software module includes a print.dll.
31. (Original): The system of claim 25 wherein said indicium further comprising a serial number.
32. (Original): The system of claim 25 wherein said pre-processed label has at least one of the following security features: bar-coding, micro-printing, watermarking, fluorescent strips, serrated edges, taggants, label sheet serial number, or individual label serial number.